



Zoning Bylaw Working Group

Date: November 5, 2020

Time: 10:30 AM to 11:30 AM

Location: Virtual Meeting

Minutes

Present: Pam Heidell, Charlie Kalauskas, Christian Klein, Jenny Raitt, Stephen Revilak, David Watson, Ralph Willmer, John Worden, Erin Zwirko.

Absent: Mike Byrne, Adam Chapdelaine.

Guests: Ali Carter.

Erin opened the meeting by reading the preamble for virtual meetings.

Erin indicated that she had only received more detailed comments from three members of the Working Group so she wanted to give the Working Group time to discuss the draft zoning amendments as a group. In particular, Erin noted that the Working Group had not discussed allowing residential uses in the Industrial Districts, specifically, by adjusting the footnote that prohibits residential uses in mixed use projects. As written, the footnote regarding mixed use allows up to 50% of the gross floor area to be residential, which would also trigger the development standards. Erin also noted that this work is not slated for a certain Town Meeting so the discussion can continue past the end of RKG and Harriman's contract.

Members of the Working Group noted that the Industrial Zoning Districts, on the whole, are small in land area and that the loss of further industrial land should not be encouraged. There was disagreement about whether residential uses should be allowed. There was also discussion about clarifying what types of residential uses would be allowed in mixed use. One member indicated that residential uses may create more options for economic growth in the community. A few members were interested in limiting the types of residential uses, such as affordable housing or senior housing. There was also some discussion about reducing the percentage in the footnote. Overall, though, the members did not come to consensus on whether residential uses should be allowed. Erin indicated that since this project will live past the end of RKG and Harriman's contract, that the Working Group can continue the discussion on residential uses.

The members did agree that the allowance should not be in a footnote; rather it should be more prominent in the text.

There was some discussion about the market for any of the uses proposed or encouraged. Ali responded that she fields many calls from breweries that are interested in locating in Arlington, but without much turnover in this area, there have been limited opportunities. Much of the industrial land is owner-occupied. There are a number of lab and life science tenants, but at the boutique scale. Members asked for examples of lab space with residential uses above as well as the percentage of residential uses that is economically viable. The members discussed whether any examples would be relevant to Arlington which does not have a high level of access by public transportation and would be at a smaller scale.

The members also discussed other aspects of the zoning amendment. One member noted that shadow studies are an important element to ensure that residential neighbors are protected from excessive height. The members also discussed whether storage facilities or fitness facilities should be expressly allowed. Erin indicated that fitness facilities are an allowed use, but allowing storage facilities can be reviewed. The members thought that the development standards could be helpful to improve the appearance of storage facilities, which did not typically have a high standard of design.

Erin explained that RKG and Harriman have another public event in their scope of work for the project. Erin noted that the contract will expire at the end of 2020, but that doesn't preclude the Working Group from holding another event in the future should the amendments proceed to a Town Meeting. The Working Group discussed doing a virtual open house where information is presented and survey questions are provided, as well as provide an option for people who might have missed the live event. The Working Group recommended using many visuals as part of the presentation. Erin will communicate this to RKG and Harriman, as well as discuss a potential evening time for the event. Depending on when the virtual event is held, the regular December meeting date might need to move in order to facilitate a debrief and wrap up with the consultants.

On the meeting summary from October 5, Ralph made a motion to approve the summary as amended. Steve seconded the motion. All members in attendance approved the motion through a roll call vote.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 AM.